

**Stony Brook University  
The Graduate School**

Doctoral Defense Announcement

**Abstract**

*För levande och döda*

By

**Ellen Sherry Lindquist**

*För levande och döda* (*For the Living and the Dead*) is a set of five pieces for soprano, bass, and chamber orchestra based on texts of contemporary Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer; the title is taken from his 1989 collection of the same name. The chamber orchestra consists of flute/alto flute, oboe/English horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, French horn, trombone, harp, piano, percussion, violin, cello, and double bass. Some pieces use the full ensemble, while others focus on smaller combinations of instruments and voices.

The five poems, which span the years 1973-1989, are *Madrigal*, *Längre in, Eldklotter*, *Minnena ser mig*, and *Romanska Bågar*. The poems and their settings represent vastly different emotional spaces, although common themes wend their way through both Tranströmer's work and my music. Most apparent is his focus on dualities, through which he explores the spaces between real and unreal worlds, between conscious and dream states. Some settings use only the original Swedish, while others mix the original with Robin Fulton's English translation (with permission).

*För levande och döda* is a concert suite of works derived from a theatrical work by the same name, which I am developing together with a full creative team of director, choreographer, set/costume designer, and lighting designer. Using a unique improvisational workshop environment, the raw musical material for this set of compositions has come in part from the players themselves. The initial workshop was held at Stony Brook University in January 2006; since then, twice the entire ensemble of 20 artists (15 musicians plus the creative team) has met to work together: at the Gateway Theatre on Long Island in January 2007, and at Engsö Castle in Sweden in June 2007. During these weeklong workshops we used a feedback process. The director, the choreographer, and I designed improvisational exercises stemming both from the poetry and from our structural ideas for the overall piece. All sessions were recorded in audio and video formats; I used ideas inspired by the recorded material in the generation of new music for the subsequent workshop, and of course for the development of the finished piece.

**Date:** April 14, 2008

**Time:** 1 p.m.

**Place:** Staller 3354, Vocal Studio

**Program:** Music

**Dissertation Advisor:** Daniel Weymouth